

Local I-O Group Relations Committee: Local Group Update

Anna Erickson, SIOP Local I-O Group Relations Committee

As our extended schedule for the virtual SIOP conference has drawn to a close, and many classrooms also pause for summer, does it feel like something is missing? That sense of belonging, comradery, and common purpose feels a little further away as we return to our day-to-day schedules, leaving us wanting to continue the experience. It is likely that it is out of these very moments that many local groups are born.

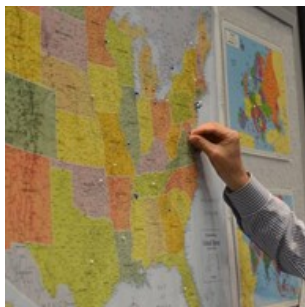
What Is a “Local Group”?

Although SIOP does not have a local chapter structure, communities of I-O psychologists have emerged to form “grass-roots” organizations. There are dozens of local groups that have formed across the US and around the world. Some are formal and highly structured; others are informal and more casual. All share a common purpose in connecting like-minded individuals to share ideas, research, and practice, while networking and learning from each other. Local groups are the “boots on the ground” that can expand I-O’s impact into the communities where the work gets done. For many they provide a safe space to build comradery, support one another, and explore new ideas. For many years, these groups have met in restaurants, hotels, and classrooms within their respective communities and regions. With the onset of COVID-19, many local groups extended their reach, welcoming professionals from the wider I-O community via virtual events and meetings.



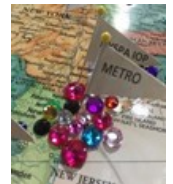
Local I-O Group Relations Committee volunteers ask conference participants “Where do you I-O?” during the 2019 SIOP Conference at National Harbor: **Nazanin Tadjbakhsh, Michael H. Chetta, Anna Erickson, Lindsey Bergin, Donna Sylvan, Ginger Whelan, Peter Scontrino, and Sharon Glazer.**

The Local I-O Group Relations Committee



In 2013, under **Tammy Allen’s** leadership, the SIOP Executive Board created the *Local I-O Group Relations Committee*, an ad hoc committee with a goal to “create a strong connection between SIOP and locally operated I-O groups.” Rather than *creating* local groups, the committee set out to *discover* them. In the fall 2015 issue of *TIP* the committee reported that “until recently, there has been little known about these groups, their needs, and the role they play in our growing profession.” (Farmer, et al., 2015).

Beginning with a survey of 4,570 SIOP members in 2014 (Farmer et al., 2015), followed by a global survey in 2017 (Erickson et al., 2017), the committee learned more about existing groups, their purpose, their activities and events, and the benefits provided to their members. From this beginning, the committee began to compile a list of local groups, locations, and contact information. Building on this work, they set out to learn more. The committee hosted sessions at the annual conference to solicit input from conference attendees about their own local groups. Setting up tables, maps, and booths at both the SIOP and EAWOP conferences, the committee posed the question “Where do you I-O?” while coaxing those conference attendees willing to listen to post a pin on the map representing local groups and/or desire to join a local group. The information gathered at these conferences helped the committee gain a better perspective of the landscape.



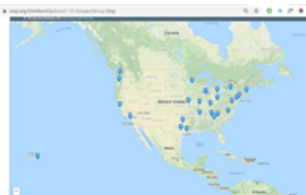
How Do I Join a Local Group? Is There a Group Near Me?

Probably. Maybe. Well, it depends. There are dozens of groups across the US and around the world. These groups vary greatly in age, size, and membership requirements. The oldest local group, New York Metropolitan Association of Applied Psychology, aka METRO, is more than

75 years old, created long before SIOP was founded. But there are not groups in every city.

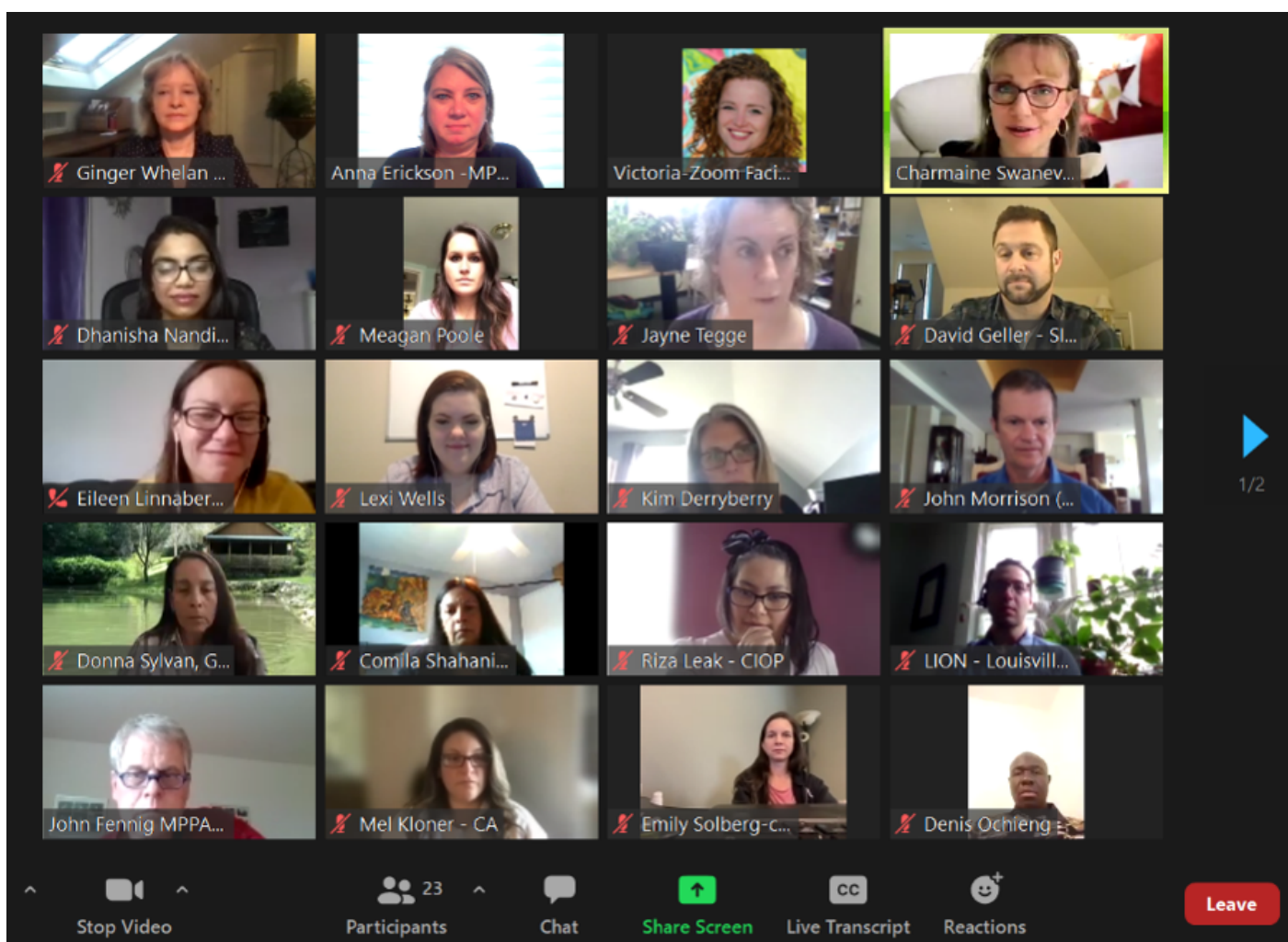
The Local I-O Group Committee maintains a listing of local groups on the SIOP website, <https://www.siop.org/Membership/Local-I-O-Groups>. There you will find the name and location of each local group along with a description and link to the group's website (if applicable). You can also look for upcoming activities on the [event calendar](#). With COVID restrictions, many groups have moved to virtual meetings and events, providing you with opportunities to attend meetings hosted by groups far from your physical location. Some groups offer continuing education credits as well. If your local group has an upcoming event, is not included on the website, or if there's outdated information about your group, please let the committee know via email at Local_IO_Groups@siop.org.

When Will You Start a Group Near Me?



Neither SIOP nor SIOP's Local I-O Group Committee has the authority to establish local groups. Every local group has been started by volunteers—like you! So how do you get started?

Have no fear! SIOP's Local I-O Group Committee is here to help! The committee offers support for those who want to start a local group.



Screen shot from “Fishing for the Best of 2020: How Local I-O Groups Address Emerging Challenges”, an alternative session hosted by the Local I-O Group Committee during the 2021 Virtual Conference.

- **A list of existing groups.** Check to see if a group exists before starting a new one. Reach out and share your ideas, your passion, and your time! The existing group will probably welcome your interest and leadership.
- **A local group toolkit.** There are lots of things to consider when starting a local group. The toolkit pulls together resources and recommendations gathered from those who have started groups already. It includes information about choices, options, and lessons learned.
- **Local leader forums.** The Local I-O Group Committee hosts quarterly meetings to connect local leaders. These 90-minute Zoom calls focus on specific topics relevant to local group leaders.

- Discussion platforms. The committee maintains communication platforms including a listserv and a LinkedIn group. These vehicles make it easier for us to communicate with local leaders and for local leaders to communicate with each other.

Whether you are starting a new local group or leading an existing local group, we would love to have you join us! If you would like to participate in any of these activities, please email the committee at Local_IO_Groups@siop.org and we'll be happy to add you to the list. All are welcome – whether you're just starting out, have been going strong for years, or are trying to revive a struggling group!